



## The Usage of Arabic Sexual Terms and Gender Discrimination in Lebanon

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### Abstract

Gender discrimination is a pervasive issue that persists in many societies worldwide, including Lebanon. The usage of Arabic sexual terms in the Lebanese dialect is a significant contributor to the perpetuation of gender discrimination specifically, against women and the LGBTQ+ community. The paper explores how language perpetuates harmful gender stereotypes and reinforces discrimination against women and LGBTQ+ individuals through a review of relevant literature. Furthermore, the intersectionality of gender, sexuality, and language is discussed, highlighting the unique challenges faced by LGBTQ+ individuals in navigating gendered language. A quantitative analysis of the attitude towards sexist language and the frequency of the usage of sexual terms in both formal and informal settings is also conducted within the data population. According to the study conducted, the use of sexual terms has a significant correlation with discrimination based on gender and sexual orientation towards women and the LGBTQ+ community. These terms reinforce negative stereotypes and societal norms that further the prevalence of gender inequality and discriminatory practices. There is an urgent need for efforts to promote inclusive language and encourage the use of the right sexual terminology to achieve less verbal gender discrimination in Lebanon.

**Keywords:** Gender Discrimination, Arabic Sexual Terms, Gender Stereotypes, Women, LGBTQ+ Community, Sexist language, Inclusive language, Lebanon

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## 1. Introduction

### 1.1. Background Information on Gender Discrimination in Lebanon

Lebanon's history of conflict and social tensions has contributed to persistent gender discrimination in the country (Stephan and Charrad, 2020; World Bank and UN Women, 2021). Despite recent progress toward gender equality, Lebanon ranks poorly on global measures of gender equality (Avis, 2017). Women in Lebanon face many challenges including discrimination in employment, political participation, violence, and harassment (Lebanon, n.d.). A patriarchal system, deeply rooted in societal norms and values, reinforces gender discrimination by limiting women's opportunities and enforcing rigid gender roles (Joseph, 2018). Discriminatory laws and practices such as unequal inheritance laws and the lack of protection against marital

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rape perpetuate gender inequality in the Lebanese legal framework ([Human Rights Watch, 2020](#)). Additionally, the LGBTQ+ community in Lebanon faces widespread discrimination and stigma exacerbated by the intersection of gender and sexuality ([Merabet, 2014](#)). Discrimination against LGBTQ+ people is reflected in the language used and the lack of legal guarantees for their rights. The use of Arabic sexual terms significantly contributes to the perpetuation of gender discrimination especially toward women and the LGBTQ+ community. Language reflects and reinforces societal norms and values, including harmful gender stereotypes and discriminatory attitudes. The use of sexual terms that denigrate or objectify women and LGBTQ+ people reinforces negative perceptions of these groups and contributes to their marginalization ([Fernández-Antelo et al., 2020](#)). According to research, derogatory sexual terms can have a significant impact on the self-esteem and mental health of women and LGBTQ+ people ([Glick and Fiske, 2018; Herek, 2000](#)). Additionally, the use of sexual terms can normalize gender-based violence, such as sexual assault and harassment, by trivializing and normalizing these behaviors ([Fernández-Antelo et al., 2020](#)). The intersection of gender, sexuality, and language poses a unique challenge for LGBTQ+ individuals to navigate the language of gender. Using gendered language that is inconsistent with a person's gender identity can be a source of distress and contribute to feelings of isolation and discrimination ([Bockting et al., 2013](#)). The use of Arabic sexual terms in the Lebanese dialect has significant implications for perpetuating gender discrimination and marginalization of women and LGBTQ+ people and underscores the need for efforts to promote more inclusive and equitable language use in society.

## 2. Purpose and Objectives of the Study

This paper studies how using sexual terms in Arabic affects gender discrimination in Lebanon. A review of relevant literature is analyzed to better understand how language and gender discrimination are linked, particularly when it comes to using sexual terms. Additionally, people from my social media circle (a mix of pre-college, college, and graduate students) were surveyed to analyze how often people use certain sexual terms in Lebanon in both formal and informal settings and their attitude toward the Arabic language. It's important to use language that includes everyone and is fair, especially when it comes to gender vis-à-vis using the right terms. This can help reduce gender discrimination in Lebanon. I hope that this research can help us better understand how language, gender, and sexuality are intersected, and contribute to making Lebanon a more inclusive and equal place.

## 3. Theoretical Approach

This research takes two theoretical perspectives into account: Intersectionality and Standpoint Feminist Theories. Intersectionality and standpoint feminist theory are frameworks that provide valuable insights into the complexities of social identities and power dynamics. They offer perspectives on how different aspects of an individual's identity can influence their experiences and interactions within society.

Intersectionality recognizes that individuals have multiple intersecting identities, such as race, gender, class, sexuality, and disability. These identities are interconnected and shape how individuals experience privilege or oppression. Language use plays a role in reflecting and perpetuating power imbalances and inequalities. Certain terms or expressions can reinforce stereotypes or marginalize specific groups, while others can challenge existing power structures and promote inclusivity ([Warner and Shields, 2018](#)). Whereas Standpoint feminist theory highlights that knowledge is influenced by an individual's social position and lived experiences. Those occupying marginalized positions, such as women, people of color, and different sexual orientations, or those from lower socioeconomic backgrounds, offer unique perspectives on social structures and systems of oppression ([Harding, 2009](#)). Valuing diverse linguistic perspectives is emphasized, challenging the notion of a universal language, and recognizing that language reflects power dynamics. Critically analyzing language use helps to identify how it can either reinforce hierarchies or amplify marginalized voices. Using inclusive language that respects diverse experiences and identities is important.

Intersectionality and standpoint feminist theory draw attention to how language can both reflect and perpetuate social inequalities. They advocate for critically examining language use and promoting linguistic practices that foster inclusivity, challenge dominant narratives, and amplify marginalized voices. Recognizing the intersectional nature of identity and the situatedness of knowledge contributes to a deeper understanding of language's role in shaping and reflecting social realities.

#### 4. Methodology

In the pursuit of understanding the impact of how using sexual terms in Arabic affects gender discrimination, this paper relies on both primary and secondary resources. The desk and online review involve a comprehensive analysis of existing literature to support the purpose and objective of the study. The primary research depends on a survey that intends to study the attitudes of the participants toward sexist language and the frequency of sexual terms (including identity and orientation descriptors) usage in both formal and informal settings to ultimately study the factors affecting the conscious use of such terms. A total of 51 Arab participants responded to my survey. The findings of the study suggested significant implications for adopting new policies for more inclusive language use in Lebanon.

### 5. Literature Review

#### 5.1. Definition of Gender Discrimination and its Forms

Gender discrimination is a prevalent social issue that involves unequal treatment and opportunities based on gender ([United Nations Development Program, 2019](#)). Discrimination through language use refers to the use of language to perpetuate gender stereotypes and discrimination ([Bailey, 2020](#)). This form of discrimination can occur in various ways, such as using gendered pronouns, titles, and honorifics that reinforce traditional gender roles ([Angouri and Baxter, 2021](#)), and the use of derogatory language and sexualized terms ([Sylwander and Gottzén, 2020](#)). The impact of language use on gender discrimination has been extensively studied in recent years, and research has shown that language use can reinforce gender stereotypes and spread gender discrimination ([Bailey, 2020](#)). For instance, the use of gendered language in job advertisements can discourage women from applying for certain jobs ([Gaucher et al., 2011](#)), and the use of gendered language in performance evaluations can lead to biased evaluations of female employees ([Nittle, 2021](#)). In one study, Rudman and Glick ([2001](#)) found that the use of gendered language in job advertisements, such as masculine-coded words like "dominant" and "aggressive," led to a decrease in female applicants and perpetuated gendered stereotypes about the suitability of certain jobs for men or women. For example, using terms like "bossy" to describe assertive women can perpetuate harmful stereotypes. Moreover, discrimination through language use can significantly affect the LGBTQ+ community. Such language can be especially challenging for transgender and gender non-conforming individuals, who may not identify with traditional gender categories ([Tavits and Pérez, 2019](#)). The use of disparaging language and slurs can also contribute to a hostile and discriminatory environment for LGBTQ+ individuals ([Herek, 2015](#)).

#### 5.2. Overview of the Role of Language in Perpetuating Harmful Gender Stereotypes

Various theoretical frameworks, such as social constructionism and feminist theory, have been used to examine the relationship between language and gender discrimination. According to social constructionism, language plays a critical role in perpetuating gender stereotypes and discriminatory attitudes, as gender and language are socially constructed ([Connell, 1995](#)). Feminist theory emphasizes how language reinforces patriarchal power structures and perpetuates gender hierarchies ([Baxter, 2009](#)). Studying language use through these frameworks can provide a better understanding of how language contributes to gender discrimination and inequality. Language reinforces harmful gender stereotypes by normalizing gendered expectations and behaviors. Gendered language, including the use of gendered pronouns and titles, reinforces traditional gender roles and expectations and can contribute to a hostile environment for those who do not conform to traditional gender norms ([Abudalbuh, 2012](#)). Language use significantly affects attitudes and behaviors toward gender and gender identity and contributes to a cultural context that reinforces harmful gender stereotypes ([Palomares, 2008](#)). Additionally, media representation and language used to describe individuals can reinforce gendered expectations and behaviors ([Finneman and Jenkins, 2018](#)). For example, in "Objectification in popular music lyrics An Examination of Gender and genre differences" the use of sexual objectification language in music lyrics was found to contribute to negative attitudes towards women and the reinforcement of gendered stereotypes ([Flynn et al., 2016](#)). In another study, Brettschneider et al. ([2017](#)) found that media representations of LGBTQ+ individuals often cause harmful stereotypes and contribute to the marginalization of these groups. The Arabic language perpetuates harmful gender stereotypes through its use of grammatical gender, which assigns gender to every noun, either masculine or feminine, affecting sentence meaning ([Alkaff and Lulu, 2021](#)). For instance, the Arabic word for "doctor" is masculine, while "nurse" is feminine, marginalizing women in the medical profession. Although many men entered this profession, this role is still viewed as a

feminine job due to its historical background. The Arabic language has many derogatory terms that describe women and reinforce stereotypes about their roles and abilities, such as "housewife" and "spinster" (Abu-Lughod, 1993). These stereotypes have real-world consequences, contributing to discrimination against women in the workplace, limiting their education and advancement opportunities, and even impacting their health outcomes. Language plays a significant role in perpetuating harmful gender stereotypes reinforcing traditional gender roles and expectations, normalizing derogatory language and slurs, and contributing to a cultural context that perpetuates harmful gender stereotypes (Davis and Reynolds, 2018).

### **5.3. The use of Arabic Sexual Terms in Lebanon**

In Lebanon, the use of sexual terms in the Lebanese dialect has been linked to the reinforcement of patriarchal values and the marginalization of women and LGBTQ+ individuals (Ilkkaracan, 2008). A study conducted on Lebanese popular culture revealed that sexual terms were predominantly utilized in ways that reinforced traditional gender roles and stereotypes. In this context, women were objectified and sexualized, whereas men were depicted as dominant and aggressive (Abi-Esber, 2017). For instance, the word "kiss" (ك Investor) in Arabic means "vagina" and is used as a slur to demean someone by insinuating that they are weak. In Lebanese culture, particularly in language use, derogatory words related to females suggest weakness and fragility. Furthermore, the use of sexual terms that are derogatory or objectifying towards LGBTQ+ individuals has been found to reinforce negative perceptions of these groups and contribute to their marginalization (Glick and Fiske, 1996). The use of the Arabic term "mithli" (مثل) as a translation of homosexual has caused tensions like those surrounding the term "shadh" (شاذ) which is often used derogatorily to refer to individuals who are perceived to deviate from traditional gender and sexual norms in Arab cultures. In a separate study, it was discovered that the utilization of sexual terms in Lebanese Arabic served to normalize sexual harassment and assault against women. Women were often subjected to sexual comments and slurs in public spaces, which were used to intimidate and control them (Karam and Ghanem, 2021). However, it is important to note that the use of sexual terms is not necessarily harmful, but rather it is how they are utilized and the contexts in which they are utilized that can perpetuate harmful gender stereotypes and discrimination. One of the most effective ways to reduce gender discrimination through language use is to promote gender-neutral language. This can be done by encouraging the use of gender-inclusive terms, such as "they" instead of "he" or "she", or by creating a pronoun targeted to the individuals who do not conform to the norm.

## **6. Data Population Analysis**

### **6.1. Independent Variables**

#### *6.1.1. Age Distribution*

- 49% of the data population (25 participants) are between the ages of 18 and 24.
  - 45.1% of the data population (23 participants) are between the ages of 25 and 34.
  - 3.9% of the data population (2 participants) are between the ages of 35 and 44.
  - 2% of the data population (1 participant) is between the ages of 45 and 54.
- diversity in age distribution

#### *6.1.2. Nationality and Place of Living*

- 98% (49 participants) of the participants are Lebanese and 88% (44 participants) of them resided in Lebanon when they took the survey.
- which gives the research more authenticity and accuracy.

#### *6.1.3. Language Distribution*

- 98% (50 participants) of the data population speak both Arabic and English and 31.4% spoke French (16 participants).

#### *6.1.4. Level of Education*

- 49% (25 participants) of the data population have completed a graduate degree.
- 39.2% (20 participants) of the data population have completed a college degree.

- 7.8% (4 participants) of the data population have completed a high school degree.
  - 2% (1 participant) of the data population have completed a Ph.D. degree or higher.
  - 2% (1 participant) of the data population have completed a technical degree.
- diversity in the level of education

#### *6.1.5. Gender Identity*

- 66.7% (34 participants) of the data population identify as females.
  - 31.4% (16 participants) of the data population identify as males.
  - 2% (1 participant) of the data population identify as non-binary.
- Female participation is 52.9% more compared to male participation which could lead to biases in the results in terms of gender identity distribution.
- No representation of the trans community or intersex individuals. It could have to do with the cultural setting the survey took place or that the data population didn't reach these groups.

#### *6.1.6. Sexual Orientation*

- 62.7% (32 participants) of the data population identify as heterosexual.
  - 11.8% (6 participants) of the data population identify as bisexual.
  - 11.8% (6 participants) of the data population identify as other.
  - 3.9% (2 participants) of the data population identify as lesbian.
  - 5.9% (3 participants) of the data population identify as gay.
  - 2% (1 participant) of the data population identify as asexual.
  - 2% (1 participant) of the data population identify as pansexual.
- diversity in sexual orientations which gives a richness of perspectives to the study.

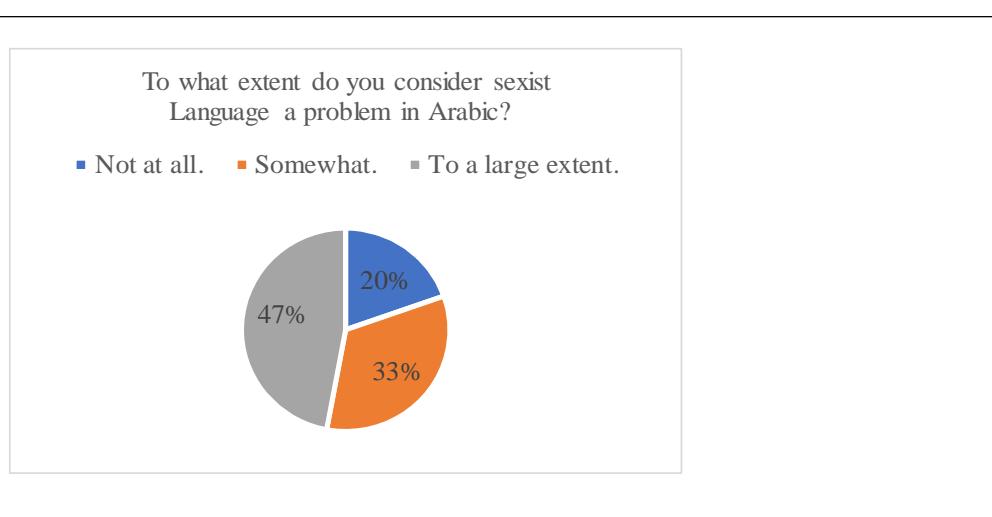
## **7. Results and Discussion**

The study analyzes two dependent variables:

- The attitudes of the data population toward sexist language
- The frequency of specific sexual terms usage in both formal and informal settings.

### **7.1. The Attitudes of the Data Population Toward Sexist Language**

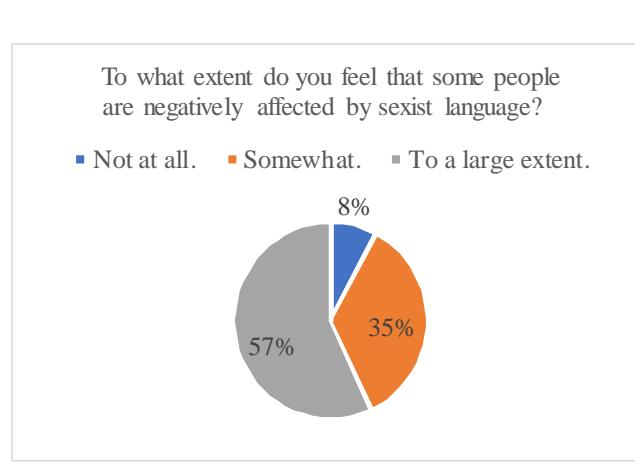
According to Figure 1, 47% of respondents consider sexist language to be a problem in Arabic to a large extent, 33% of respondents indicated that it is somewhat of a problem, while 20% of respondents do not consider it a



**Figure 1: To What Extent do you Consider Sexist Language a Problem in Arabic?**

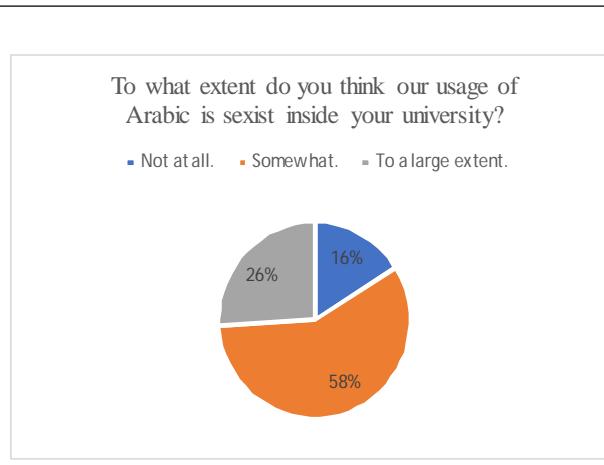
problem at all. This suggests that there is a significant awareness and concern among a portion of the Arabic-speaking population about the use of sexist language in our daily life. Yet, it is worth noting that there are still individuals who do not consider it a problem at all. It would be interesting to further explore the reasons behind the differing opinions and attitudes towards sexist language in Arabic and how this may impact the use and prevalence of such language in different contexts. Did the data population understand what sexist language meant? Do some come from an area that does not use sexist language?

According to Figure 2, 8% feel that no one is negatively affected by sexist language, 35% believe that some people are somewhat negatively affected by sexist language, and 57% feel that some people are negatively affected by sexist language to a large extent. This suggests that most respondents recognize the negative impact of sexist language on individuals, while a small percentage believe that it is not an issue. It is important to note that the extent to which people are affected by sexist language may vary based on their individual experiences and perspectives.



**Figure 2: To What Extent do you Feel that Some People are Negatively Affected by Sexist Language?**

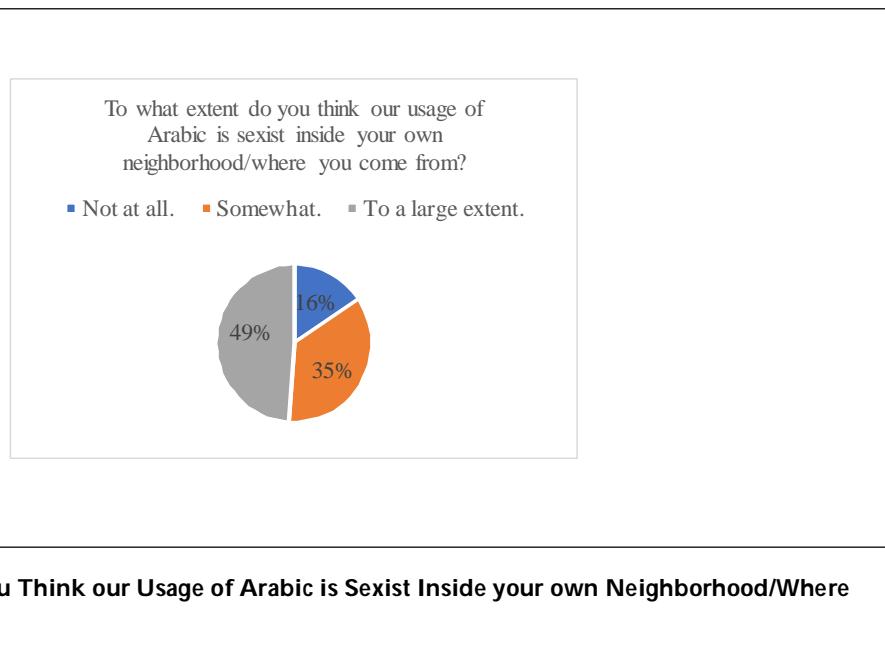
According to Figure 3, 58% of the respondents feel that the usage of Arabic inside their university is somewhat sexist, while 26% feel that it is sexist to a large extent. Only 16% of the respondents feel that it is not sexist at all. This suggests that there is a significant portion of the university community who perceives the usage of Arabic as sexist, which could be a cause for concern and a call for action to address the issue.



**Figure 3: To What Extent do you Think our Usage of Arabic is Sexist Inside your University?**

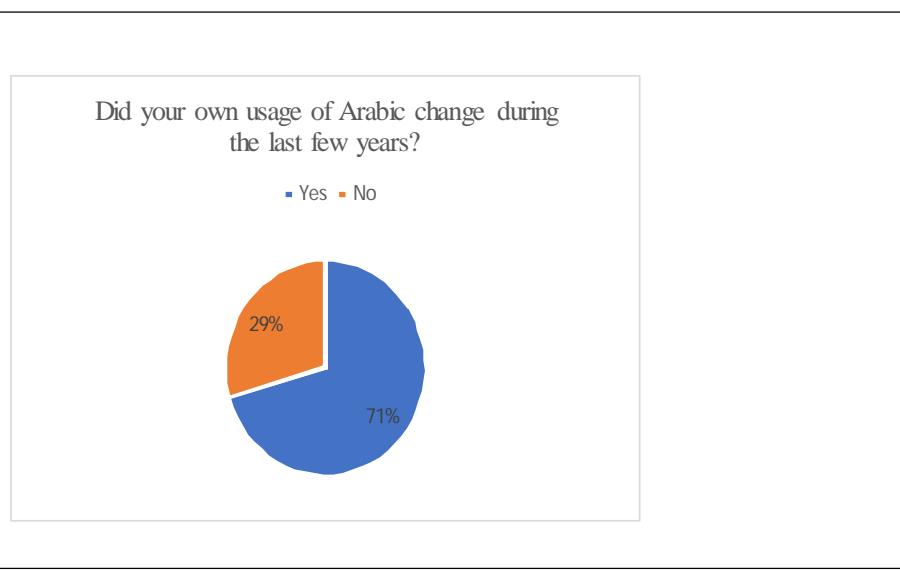
According to Figure 4, 35% of the respondents perceive some degree of sexist language usage in their neighborhood, while 16% reported no sexist language usage. Additionally, 49% reported a large extent of

sexist language usage. This suggests that there may be a prevalent issue with sexist language usage in some neighborhoods or regions, which requires further investigation and intervention.



**Figure 4: To What Extent do you Think our Usage of Arabic is Sexist Inside your own Neighborhood/Where You Come From?**

According to Figure 5, the majority of respondents (71%) reported that their own usage of Arabic has changed during the last few years, while a minority (29%) reported that their usage has not changed. However, without additional information or context about the specific changes in their usage of Arabic, it's difficult to draw further conclusions.



**Figure 5: Did your Own Usage of Arabic Change During the Last Few Years?**

It seems that the respondents believe that sexism in Arabic is an issue and that it has a detrimental impact on some people. When it comes to the use of Arabic at universities and in one's own neighborhood or place of origin, this notion is particularly prevalent. Additionally, a sizable number of those polled said that their personal usage of Arabic has changed in recent years, which may indicate that concerns about sexist language in Arabic are now more widely known and felt. It's crucial to keep in mind that these results may not be typical of the general population because they are based on a small sample size.

The frequency of sexual terms usage in both formal and informal settings is analyzed based on the following subcategories:

- The frequency of sexual terms usage in both formal and informal settings vs. age (18-24 and 25-34): Tables 2 and 3.
- The frequency of sexual terms usage in both formal and informal settings vs. sexual orientation (heterosexual and homosexual): Tables 4 and 5.

Based on Table 1, it appears that the phrase "gay" is the most commonly used phrase, with 37.3% of respondents saying they always used it in both formal and informal contexts. "Jins" (which means "gender" in Arabic) is the second most commonly used phrase, with 39.2% of respondents saying they always used it in formal contexts, but only 31.3% saying they always used it in informal contexts. Other phrases, such as

**Table 1: The Frequency of Sexual Terms Usage in Both Formal and Informal**

Phrase		Usage Frequency					
		Formal			Informal		
		Always	Sometimes	Never	Always	Sometimes	Never
مثلي / مثالية	Mithly/Mithliyya	31.3%	27.5%	41.2%	15.7%	27.5%	56.8%
لوطى/اللواط	Louti/lewat	7.8%	7.8%	84.4%	23.5%	15.7%	60.8%
شاذة	Shath/a	7.8%	15.7%	76.5%	9.8%	13.7%	76.5%
سحاقيّة	Sohakeya	4%	9.8%	86.2%	4%	17.6%	78.4%
جاي	Gay	37.3%	37.3%	25.4%	56.9%	35.3%	7.8%
عليـل	3alil	2%	4%	94%	2%	6%	92%
خنثى / مختنـث	Khinti/mokhanas	2%	6%	92%	6%	12%	82%
طـبـجي	Tobji	2%	2%	96%	6%	12%	82%
متحولـة	Mota7awel/Mota7awela	21.5%	41.2%	37.3%	17.6%	37.3%	45.1%
عـابـرـة	3aber/3abera	11.7%	25.5%	62.8%	7.8%	19.6%	72.6%
كـوـير	Queer	31.3%	29.4%	39.3%	35.2%	25.4%	39.4%
ثنـائـيـةـيـةـالجـنسـ	Thona2y/a al jins	9.8%	25.5%	64.7%	5.9%	15.7%	78.4%
لاـمعـيارـيـةـ	La mi3yaariyy/a	7.8%	15.7%	76.5%	5.9%	15.7%	78.4%
لاـثـنـائـيـةـالجـنـدـرـ	Iaa thunaa'iyy/a al-jindar	9.8%	13.7%	76.5%	5.9%	13.7%	80.4%
الـجـنـدـرـ/ـالـجـنـدـرـيـةـ	Al gandar/gandareyya	27.5%	15.7%	56.8%	19.6%	19.6%	60.8%
جـنـسـ	Jins	39.2%	31.3%	29.5%	37.2%	21.5%	41.3%
الـاجـتـمـاعـيـالـتـنـوـعـ	Al tanawo3 al ijtema3y	27.5%	31.3%	41.2%	13.7%	15.6%	70.7%
الـجـنـسـمـغـاـيـرـةـ	moghayer/a al jins	7.8%	23.5%	68.7%	4%	13.7%	82.3%
الـجـنـسـمـتوـافـقـةـ	motawafek/a al jins	7.8%	19.6%	72.6%	7.8%	11.7%	80.5%
المـيمـعـينـمـجـتمـعـ	mojtama3 al meen 3ayn	33.3%	23.5%	43.2%	27.5%	19.6%	52.9%

"mithly/mithliyya" (which means "homosexual" in Arabic) and "queer" have more variation in their usage frequency across formal and informal contexts, with some respondents saying they always use them, while others say they never use them. Whereas, the least used phrases are "tobji" (which means "act of foolishness" in Arabic), with only 2% of respondents saying they always used it in formal settings and 2% saying they always used it in informal settings, and "khinti/mokhanas" (which means "effeminate" but used as "faggot" in Arabic), with only 2% of respondents saying they always used it in formal settings and 6% saying they always used it in informal settings. Other phrases that appear to be less commonly used across both formal and informal settings include "moghayer/a al jins" (which means "heterosexual" in Arabic) and "motawafek/a al jins" (which means "cisgender" in Arabic), both of which had relatively high percentages of respondents

saying they never used them. It is important to note that the usage frequency of these phrases may vary depending on the cultural context and the specific population being surveyed. Additionally, it is possible that some respondents may not be familiar with certain phrases or may not feel comfortable using them in certain contexts, which could also impact their reported usage frequency.

When subcategorizing based on age (Table 2), 32% of respondents reported always using the phrase "Mithly/Mithliyya" (referring to a homosexual male or female) in formal settings, while 16% reported always using it in informal settings. Similarly, for the phrase "Gay," 36% of respondents reported always using it in formal settings, while 48% reported always using it in informal settings. Table 3 on the other hand, had the phrase "Gay" as the highest frequency of usage in both formal and informal contexts, followed by "Jins" similarly to before sub-categorizing the results. The phrase "Louti/Lewat" (Homosexual) has a very low frequency of usage in formal settings and a slightly higher frequency in informal settings. The phrase "La Mi3yaariyy/a" (Non-normative) and "Al Gandar/Gandareyya" (Gender) have the lowest frequency of usage in both formal and informal settings. While the phrase "Thona2y/a al jins" (Intersex) has a higher frequency of usage in informal contexts compared to formal contexts. The phrase "Motawafek/a al jins" (cisgender) has a higher frequency of usage in formal contexts compared to informal contexts.

The least used phrases, based on Tables 2 and 3, are as follows:

Phrase		Usage Frequency based on Age Category: 18-24					
		Formal			Informal		
		Always	Sometimes	Never	Always	Sometimes	Never
مثلي / مثالية	Mithly/Mithliyya	32%	28%	40%	16%	24%	60%
لوطى/اللوط	Louti/lewat	8%	8%	84%	28%	12%	60%
شادة	Shath/a	8%	8%	84%	16%	4%	80%
سحاقيّة	Sohakeya	0%	5%	95%	4%	12%	84%
جاي	Gay	36%	44%	20%	48%	48%	4%
عليل	3alil	0%	0%	100%	4%	0%	96%
خنثى/ مختنث	Khinti/mokhanas	0%	0%	100%	4%	8%	88%
طبعي	Tobji	0%	0%	100%	4%	4%	92%
متحول/ة	Mota7awel/Mota7awela	24%	32%	44%	16%	28%	56%
عابر/ة	3aber/3abera	12%	24%	63%	12%	16%	72%
كوير	Queer	40%	24%	36%	32%	28%	40%
ثنائيّي/ة الجنس	Thona2y/a al jins	8%	28%	64%	4%	16%	80%
لامعياريّة	La mi3yaariyy/a	8%	20%	72%	4%	16%	80%
لا ثنائيّي/ة الجندر	Iaa thunaa'iy/a al-jindar	12%	12%	76%	0%	12%	88%
الجندر/ الجندرية	Al gandar/gandareyya	28%	20%	52%	20%	16%	64%
جنس	Jins	36%	32%	32%	32%	12%	56%
الاجتماعي الت النوع	Al tanawo3 al ijtema3y	24%	36%	40%	8%	16%	76%
الجنس مغایر/ة	moghayer/a al jins	8%	24%	68%	0%	12%	88%
الجنس متواافق/ة	motawafek/a al jins	4%	20%	76%	0%	8%	92%
الميم-عين مجتمع	mojtama3 al meen 3ayn	28%	24%	48%	24%	28%	48%

**Table 3: Usage Frequency based on Age Category: 25-34**

Phrase		Usage Frequency based on Age Category: 25-34					
		Formal			Informal		
		Always	Sometimes	Never	Always	Sometimes	Never
مثلي / مثالية	Mithly/Mithliyya	30.4%	43.4%	26.2%	17.4%	30.4%	52.2%
لوطي / اللواط	Louti/lewat	8.7%	8.7%	82.6%	17.4%	21.7%	60.9%
شاذة	Shath/a	0%	26.1%	73.9%	4.3%	21.7%	74%
سحاقيّة	Sohakeya	0%	17.4%	82.6%	0%	26.1%	73.9%
جاي	Gay	43.4%	26.2%	30.4%	69.6%	17.4%	13%
عليل	3alil	0%	8.7%	91.3%	0%	87%	13%
خنثى / مختنث	Khinti/mokhanas	4.3%	4.4%	91.3%	4.3%	17.5%	78.2%
طجي	Tobji	4.3%	4.4%	91.3%	4.3%	21.8%	73.9%
متحول /ة	Mota7awel/Mota7awela	17.4%	30.4%	52.2%	21.7%	43.4%	34.9%
عابر /ة	3aber/3abera	8.7%	26.1%	65.2%	4.3%	26%	69.7%
كوير	Queer	21.7%	30.5%	47.8%	34.7%	21.7%	43.6%
ثنائيّي /ة الجنس	Thona2y/a al jiins	8.7%	26.1%	65.2%	8.7%	17.4%	73.9%
لامعياري /ة	La mi3yaariyy/a	4.3%	13%	82.7%	8.7%	17.4%	73.9%
لامثافيّي /ة الجندر	Iaa thunaa'iyy/a al-jindar	4.3%	17.4%	78.3%	13%	17.4%	69.6%
الجندر / الجندرية	Al gandar/gandareyya	17.4%	13%	69.6%	13%	21.7%	34.7%
جنس	Jins	43.5%	30.4%	26.1%	43.4%	30.4%	26.2%
الاجتماعي التنوّع	Al tanawo3 al ijtema3y	30.4%	21.7%	47.9%	21.7%	17.4%	60.9%
الجنس مغاير /ة	moghayer/a al jins	4.3%	26%	69.7%	8.7%	17.4%	73.9%
الجنس متّوافق /ة	motawafek/a al jins	8.7%	21.7%	69.6%	17.4%	17.4%	65.2%
الميم - عين مجتمع	mojtama3 al meen 3ayn	39.1%	17.4%	43.5%	30.4%	8.7%	60.9%

- سحاقيّة (Sohakeya) - used always by 0% in formal settings and 4.3% in informal settings, and never by 84% in informal settings.
- عليل (3alil) - used always by none in formal and informal settings, and never by most respondents in both settings.
- خنثى / مختنث (Khinti/mokhanas) - used always by none in both formal and informal settings, and never by all of the respondents in both settings.
- طجي (Tobji) - used always by almost 4% of the respondents in both formal and informal settings, and never by most respondents in both settings.
- الجنس مغاير /ة (moghayer/a al jins) - used always by almost 4% of the respondents in formal settings and 8% of the respondents in informal settings, and never by 68% of the respondents in informal settings.
- الجنس متّوافق /ة (motawafek/a al jins) - used always by around 8% in formal settings and around 20% in informal settings, and never by almost 70% of the respondents in informal settings.

It is important to note that these numbers only represent the usage frequency of these phrases among a specific age category and may not be generalizable to other populations or age groups. Additionally, the cultural and societal context in which these phrases are used may also affect their frequency of usage.

According to Table 4, the phrase "*Louti/lewat*" is used in formal settings by 26.3% of respondents, but only 5.3% of respondents use it in formal settings. Similarly, "*Shath/a*" is used by only 5.3% of respondents in both formal and informal settings. On the other hand, some phrases are used more frequently in formal settings than in informal ones. For example, "*Al gandar/gandareyya*" is used in formal settings by 21% of respondents, but only 10.5% of respondents use it in informal settings. The least used phrases, according to Table 4, are سحاقية (*Sohakeya*), which means "sapphist" but is used mostly to dehumanize lesbians and is not used in formal settings, and طبجي/*mokhanas* (خنثى/*Tobji*), are not used in formal settings. In informal settings, the least used phrases by the respondents are الجنس مغاير/*a al jindar*, ثنائي/*Thona2y/a al jindar*, (*moghayer/a al jins*), and الجنس متواافق/*motawafek/a al jins*. According to Table 5, the phrase "gay" has a high frequency of use in both formal and informal settings, with 34.4% always using it in formal settings and 56.3% always using it in informal settings. Meanwhile, the phrase "*khinti/mokhanas*" has a high frequency of never being used in formal settings (90.6%) but is sometimes used in informal settings (15.6%). Some phrases are used more frequently by certain sexual orientations than others. For example, "Gay" is used always or sometimes by 84.2% of homosexual respondents, but only 68.8% of heterosexual respondents use it. Based on Tables 4 and 5, it appears that the usage frequency of the phrases varies based on the sexual orientation subcategory.

**Table 4: Usage Frequency based on Sexual Orientation: Homosexual (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Pansexual, Asexual, Other)**

Phrase		Usage Frequency based on sexual orientation: Homosexual (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Pansexual, Asexual, other)					
		Formal			Informal		
		Always	Sometimes	Never	Always	Sometimes	Never
مثلي/ <i>Mithly/Mithliyya</i>	<i>Mithly/Mithliyya</i>	31.6%	26.3%	42.1%	15.8%	36.8%	47.4%
لوطي/ <i>اللواط</i>	<i>Louti/lewat</i>	5.3%	10.5%	84.2%	26.3%	26.3%	47.4%
شاد/ <i>شاده</i>	<i>Shath/a</i>	5.3%	15.8%	78.9%	5.3%	15.8%	78.9%
سحاقية	<i>Sohakeya</i>	0%	5.3%	94.7%	5.3%	26.3%	68.4%
جاي	<i>Gay</i>	42.1%	42.1%	15.8%	57.9%	31.6%	10.5%
عليل	<i>3alil</i>	0%	5.3%	94.7%	5.3%	5.3%	89.4%
خنثى/ <i>mokhanas</i>	<i>Khinti/mokhanas</i>	0%	5.3%	94.7%	10.5%	5.3%	84.2%
طبجي	<i>Tobji</i>	0%	5.3%	94.7%	10.5%	5.3%	84.2%
متحول/ <i>Mota7awel/Mota7awela</i>	<i>Mota7awel/Mota7awela</i>	15.8%	42.1%	42.1%	21%	31.6%	47.4%
عاشر/ <i>3aber/3abera</i>	<i>3aber/3abera</i>	10.5%	26.3%	63.2%	10.5%	15.8%	73.7%
كوير	<i>Queer</i>	36.8%	31.6%	31.6%	47.7%	21%	31.3%
ثنائي/ <i>Thona2y/a al jins</i>	<i>Thona2y/a al jins</i>	10.5%	36.9%	52.6%	0%	10.5%	89.5%
لامعياري/ <i>La mi3yaariyy/a</i>	<i>La mi3yaariyy/a</i>	5.3%	21%	73.7%	5.3%	15.8%	78.9%
لا ثنائي/ <i>Iaa thunaa'iy/a al-jindar</i>	<i>Iaa thunaa'iy/a al-jindar</i>	5.3%	21%	73.7%	0%	10.5%	89.5%
الجدر/ <i>الجدرية</i>	<i>Al gandar/gandareyya</i>	21%	21%	58%	10.5%	10.5%	79%
جنس	<i>Jins</i>	31.6%	36.8%	31.6%	21%	21%	58%
الاجتماعي الت النوع	<i>Al tanawo3 al ijtema3y</i>	15.8%	36.8%	47.4%	5.3%	15.8%	78.9%
الجنس مغاير/ <i>moghayer/a al jins</i>	<i>moghayer/a al jins</i>	5.3%	31.6%	63.1%	0%	15.8%	84.2%
الجنس متواافق/ <i>motawafek/a al jins</i>	<i>motawafek/a al jins</i>	5.3%	26.3%	68.7%	0%	15.8%	84.2%
الميم-عين مجتمع	<i>mojtama3 al meen 3ayn</i>	31.6%	26.3%	42.1%	31.6%	15.8%	52.6%

The term “*Jins*” (sex) had the highest usage frequency across both formal and informal settings, the term “*Gay*” also had a relatively high usage frequency across both formal and informal settings. On the other hand, terms like “*Khinti/mokhanas*” (effeminate) and “*Tobji*” (act of foolishness) had very low usage frequency across both formal and informal settings. Other terms like “*La mi3yaariyy/a*” (non-normative) and “*La thunaa’iyy/a al-jindar*” (non-binary) also had low usage frequency in both formal and informal settings. The subcategory of sexual orientation seems to have a significant impact on the usage frequency of the phrases. For instance, the term “*Gay*” had high usage frequency across both formal and informal settings, while terms like “*Louti/lewat*” (sodomite) and “*Sohakeya*” (lesbian) had lower usage frequency. This is used in official language such as in religious books. The use of derogatory terms in legal and religious documents is well demonstrated in the sexist and discriminatory attitudes towards the LGBTQ+ community. This suggests that there may be more stigma or negative attitudes associated with certain sexual orientations, which could affect the usage of related terminology. It’s important to note that this data only represents a specific group of people (whether heterosexuals or homosexuals) and may not be representative of the entire population. Additionally, the data is limited to the specific phrases and contexts provided and may not reflect broader trends in language use related to sexual orientation.

Various other subcategories might affect the data on the frequency of usage of the above phrases such as the geographic location of the respondent where certain terms may be more commonly used in certain regions in

**Table 5: Usage Frequency Based on Sexual Orientation: Heterosexual**

Phrase		Usage Frequency based on Sexual Orientation: Heterosexual					
		Formal			Informal		
		Always	Sometimes	Never	Always	Sometimes	Never
مثلي / مثالية	<i>Mithly/Mithliyya</i>	31.25%	21.12%	47.63%	15.6%	21.9%	62.5%
لوطي/اللواط	<i>Louti/lewat</i>	9.4%	6.3%	84.3%	21.9%	9.4%	68.7%
شاذ/ة	<i>Shath/a</i>	9.4%	15.6%	75%	12.5%	12.5%	75%
سحاقيّة	<i>Sohakeya</i>	6.3%	12.5%	81.2%	3.1%	12.5%	84.4%
جاي	<i>Gay</i>	34.4%	34.4%	31.2%	56.3%	37.5%	6.2%
عليل	<i>3alil</i>	3.1%	3.1%	93.8%	0%	6.3%	93.7%
خنثى/ مختنث	<i>Khinti/mokhanas</i>	0%	9.4%	90.6%	3.1%	15.6%	81.3%
طجي	<i>Tobji</i>	0%	3.1%	96.9%	3.1%	15.6%	81.3%
متحول/ة	<i>Mota7awel/Mota7awela</i>	25%	34.4%	40.6%	15.6%	40.6%	43.8%
عاير/ة	<i>3aber/3abera</i>	12.5%	25%	62.5%	6.3%	21.9%	71.8%
كوير	<i>Queer</i>	28.1%	28.1%	43.8%	28.1%	28.1%	43.8%
ثنائيّي/ة الجنس	<i>Thona2y/a al jins</i>	9.4%	18.8%	71.8%	9.4%	18.8%	71.8%
لامعياريّة	<i>La mi3yaariyy/a</i>	9.4%	12.5%	78.1%	6.3%	15.6%	78.1%
لا ثنائيّي/ة الجندر	<i>Iaa thunaa’iyy/a al-jindar</i>	12.5%	9.4%	78.1%	9.4%	15.6%	75%
الجندر/ الجندرية	<i>Al gandar/gandareyya</i>	31.25%	12.5%	56.25%	25%	25%	50%
جنس	<i>Jins</i>	43.8%	28.1%	28.1%	46.9%	21.9%	31.2%
الاجتماعي التنوع	<i>Al tanawo3 al ijtema3y</i>	34.4%	28.1%	37.5%	18.8%	15.6%	65.6%
الجنس مغاير/ة	<i>moghayer/a al jins</i>	9.4%	18.8%	71.8%	6.3%	12.5%	81.2%
الجنس متافق/ة	<i>motawafek/a al jins</i>	9.4%	15.6%	75%	12.5%	9.4%	78.1%
الميم-عين مجتمع	<i>mojtama3 al meen 3ayn</i>	34.4%	21.9%	43.7%	25%	21.9%	53.1%

Lebanon. The education level of the respondents may also play a role in the results as people with higher education levels may be more aware of different terminology and use them more frequently. Additionally, the social and cultural background of the respondents as some people from more conservative backgrounds may be less likely to use certain terms compared to those from more liberal backgrounds. There is a strong association between the usage of sexual terms and gender discrimination against women and LGBTQ+ individuals. The use of such terms perpetuates harmful stereotypes and reinforces societal norms that promote gender inequality and discrimination. This can lead to several negative consequences, including the marginalization and exclusion of women and LGBTQ+ individuals, the normalization of sexual harassment and assault, and the perpetuation of harmful gender roles and expectations.

## **8. Recommendations and Conclusion**

Several policy recommendations can be made to decrease the prevalence of gender discrimination through language usage in Lebanon. These recommendations are based on findings from research studies and are aimed at promoting more inclusive and equitable language use in society. The intersectionality of gender, sexuality, and language in the Lebanese context highlights the need for efforts to promote inclusive language and encourage the use of the right sexual terminology to achieve less verbal gender discrimination in Lebanon. This includes efforts to raise awareness of the harmful effects of sexist language and to encourage the use of gender-neutral and LGBTQ+ inclusive language in all aspects of life. Educating the public about the impact of language on gender discrimination can lead to more inclusive language and avoid perpetuating harmful stereotypes. This can be done through public awareness campaigns, workshops, and training programs for educators and healthcare providers by raising awareness about the negative effects of gendered language. Additionally, it's important to create a culture of respect and inclusivity that values diversity and recognizes the importance of inclusive and equitable language by promoting policies and practices that encourage respectful communication. Examples include workplace policies that prohibit discriminatory language. Another important policy recommendation is to increase the representation of women and LGBTQ+ individuals in positions of power and influence. This can help individuals from marginalized groups have a greater say in the language that is used in society and can work to promote more inclusive language use as the Standpoint Theory suggests. Language plays a significant role in perpetuating harmful gender stereotypes, reinforcing traditional gender roles and expectations, normalizing derogatory language and slurs, and contributing to a cultural context that perpetuates harmful gender stereotypes. Citizens must understand that despite some progress in achieving gender equality goals, underlying sexism and disrespectful language still exist, affecting the mental well-being of women and LGBTQ+ communities. Addressing sexism in the Arabic language requires a focus on institutional-level changes, as education shapes the behavior, values, and expressions of adults. It is essential to include the LGBTQ+ community in such efforts, with the introduction of new policies, such as name-changing policies, independent of government biases. The implementation of gender-sensitive language guidelines can help eliminate labeling and prejudice, as demonstrated by previous research. The introduction of gender-neutral language and feminization in Arab societies can contribute to the eradication of gender discrimination against women and the LGBTQ+ community, ultimately transforming policies and education.

## **9. Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research**

Like any research project, the proposed study investigating the effect of Arabic sexual terms on gender discrimination in Lebanon has certain limitations that should be acknowledged. One limitation is that the focus is on the Lebanese dialect only, which may not represent the wider Arab-speaking world. Another limitation is the difficulty in measuring the impact of language on gender discrimination, as it is often deeply ingrained in social structures and attitudes. Additionally, the study relies on small sample data, which may be subject to biases and inaccuracies. Future studies might build on this research by examining the impact of additional elements including religion, culture, and history on language usage and gender discrimination in Lebanon. The influence of social status and power relationships on language use and its impact on gender discrimination should also be explored in future studies. Moreover, future research could evaluate the effectiveness of interventions aimed at promoting more inclusive language use in Lebanon, such as awareness campaigns, education and training programs, and policy initiatives.

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## Appendix

In my primary research, the population will be any Arabic-speaking participants. It will particularly study the attitudes of the data population toward sexist language and the frequency of sexual terms usage in both formal and informal settings.

Survey:

Sexist language refers to words and phrases that demean, ignore, or stereotype members of either sex or that needlessly call attention to gender. It's a form of biased language. Usually, the usage of sexist language affects both women and the LGBTQ+ community negatively.

(Before the survey starts)

1. Do you speak Arabic daily?

- a. Yes
- b. No

(If they say Yes, they can continue the survey, if not then they can't continue it)

Demographics:

1. Age (*you need to be over 18 years old to participate*)

- 18-24
- 25-34
- 35-44
- 45-54
- 55-64
- 65 and over

2. Nationality:

3. Which country do you live in?

4. What language(s) do you speak? Select all that apply.

- Arabic
- English
- French
- Armenian

5. What is the highest level of education you have completed?

- No formal schooling
- Less than high school
- High school
- Technical certificate
- College degree
- Graduate degree
- PhD or higher

6. How would you best describe your gender identity currently?

- Male
- Female
- Intersex

Appendix (Cont.)

• Non-binary

• Trans woman

• Trans man

• Other

7. How would you best describe your sexual orientation currently?

• Lesbian

• Gay

• Bisexual

• Pansexual

• Asexual

• Heterosexual

• Other

**Part I.** Consists of five questions that reveal the attitudes of the data population toward sexist language.

They are as follows:

**To what extent do you consider sexist Language a problem in Arabic?**

1. Not at all.

2. Somewhat.

3. To a large extent.

**To what extent do you feel that some people are negatively affected by sexist language?**

1. Not at all.

2. Somewhat.

3. To a large extent.

**To what extent do you think our usage of Arabic is sexist inside your university? (disregard if you never went to college)**

1. Not at all.

2. Somewhat.

3. To a large extent.

**To what extent do you think our usage of Arabic is sexist inside your own neighborhood/where you come from?**

1. Not at all.

2. Somewhat.

3. To a large extent.

**Did your own usage of Arabic change during the last few years?**

1. Yes

2. No

**If so, where does the pressure to change your usage of sexist language come from?**

1. The Government.

2. University Administration.

3. The Society.

4. Student Activities.

## Appendix (Cont.)

- 5. Friends
- 6. The Media.
- 7. Social Media
- 8. Other

**Part II:** The following section will test how frequently the below terms are used in **formal** settings using the below scale:

- 1. Always
- 2. Sometimes
- 3. Never

Phrase		Usage Frequency		
		Always	Sometimes	Never
مثلي / مثالية	<i>Mithly/Mithliyya</i>			
لوطى/اللوط	<i>Louti/lewat</i>			
شاذة	<i>Shath/a</i>			
سحاقية	<i>Sohakeya</i>			
جاي	<i>Gay</i>			
عليل	<i>3alil</i>			
خنثى / مختنث	<i>Khinti/mokhanas</i>			
طبعي	<i>Tobji</i>			
متحول/ة	<i>Mota7awel/Mota7awela</i>			
عاشرة	<i>3aber/3abera</i>			
كوير	<i>Queer</i>			
ثنائيّيّة الجنس	<i>Thona2y/a al jins</i>			
لامعياريّة	<i>La mi3yaariyy/a</i>			
لامثنائيّة الجندر	<i>Iaa thunaa'iyy/a al-jindar</i>			
الجندر / الجندرية	<i>Al gandar/gandareyya</i>			
جنس	<i>Jins</i>			
الاجتماعي الت النوع	<i>Al tanawo3 al ijtema3y</i>			
الجنس مغاير/ة	<i>moghayer/a al jins</i>			
الجنس متواافق/ة	<i>motawafek/a al jins</i>			
الميم-عين مجتمع	<i>mojtama3 al meen 3ayn</i>			

**Part III:** The following section will test how frequently the below terms are used in **informal** settings using the below scale:

- 1. Always
- 2. Sometimes
- 3. Never

## Appendix (Cont.)

Phrase		Usage Frequency		
		Always	Sometimes	Never
مثلي / مثالية	Mithly/Mithliyya			
لوطي / اللواط	Louti/lewat			
شاذة	Shath/a			
سحاقيّة	Sohakeya			
جاي	Gay			
عليل	3alil			
خنثى / مختنث	Khinti/mokhanas			
طبعي	Tobji			
محتحول / متحول	Mota7awel/Mota7awela			
عاشر / عابر	3aber/3abera			
كوير	Queer			
ثنائيّي /ة الجنس	Thona2y/a al jins			
لامعياريّة	La mi3yaariyy/a			
لامثناويّة الجنس	Iaa thunaa'iyy/a al-jindar			
الجندريّة / الجندرية	Al gandar/gandareyya			
جنس	Jins			
الاجتماعي التنوّع	Al tanawo3 al ijtema3y			
الجنس مغایر /ة	moghayer/a al jins			
الجنس متواافق /ة	motawafek/a al jins			
الميم - عين مجتمع	mojtama3 al meen 3ayn			
<b>Part IV:</b> Do you know of any words (other than the ones already mentioned above) used in a derogative manner to discriminate based on sex/gender?				
<b>Part V:</b> Comments:				